NUMB. CXXXI.

The GUARDIAN.

Iter Pigrorum quaſi ſepes Spinarum. ex Latin. Prov.

Tueſday, Auguſt 11. 1713.

THERE are two ſorts of Perſons within the Conſideration of my Frontiſpiece; the firſt are the mighty Body of Lingerers, Perſons who don't indeed employ their Time Criminally, but are ſuch pretty Innocents, who, as the Poet ſays,

——————*waſte away*
In gentle Inactivity the Day——

The others being ſomething more Vivacious, are ſuch as do not only omit to ſpend their Time well, but are in the conſtant Purſuit of Criminal Satisfactions. Whatever the Divine may think, the Caſe of the firſt ſeems to be the moſt deplorable, as the Habit of Sloth is more invincible than that of Vice. The firſt is preferr'd even when the Man is fully poſſeſſed of himſelf, and ſubmitted to with conſtant Deliberation and cool Thought. The other we are driv'n into generally thro' the Heat of Wine or Youth, which Mr. *Hobbs* calls a Natural Drunkenneſs; and therefore conſequently are more excuſable for any Errors committed during the Deprivation or Suſpenſion of our Reaſon, than in the Poſſeſſion of it. The Irregular Starts of Vicious Appetites are in Time deſtroyed by the Gratification of 'em; but a well ordered Life of Sloth, receives daily Strength from its Continuance. *I went* (ſays *Solomon*) *by the field of the Slothful, and the Vineyard of the Man void of Underſtanding, and, lo! it was all grown over with Thorns, and Nettles had covered the Face thereof, and the Stone Wall thereof was broken down.* To raiſe the Image of this Perſon, the ſame Author adds, *The ſlothful Man hideth his Hand in his Boſom, and it grieveth him to bring it again to his Mouth.* If there were no future Account expected of ſpending our Time, the immediate Inconvenience that attends a Life of Idleneſs, ſhould of it ſelf be Perſuaſion enough to the Men of Senſe to avoid it. I ſay to the Men of Senſe, becauſe there are ſome of theſe that give into it, and for theſe chiefly is this Paper deſigned. Arguments drawn from future Rewards and Puniſhments, are things too remote for the Conſideration of ſtubborn Sanguin Youth. They are affected by ſuch only as propoſe immediate Pleaſure or Pain; as the ſtrongeſt Perſuaſive to the Children of *Iſrael* was a Land flowing with Milk and Hony. I believe I may ſay there is more Toil, Fatigue and Uneaſineſs in Sloth, than can be found in any Employment a Man will put himſelf upon. When a Thoughtful Man is once fixed this way, Spleen is the neceſſary Conſequence. This directs him inſtantly to the Contemplation of his Health or Circumſtances, which muſt ever be found extremely bad upon theſe melancholy Enquiries. If he has any common Buſineſs upon his Hands, numberleſs Objections ariſe, that make the Diſpatch of it impoſſible; and he cries out with *Solomon*, There is a Lion in the Way, a Lion in the Streets; that is, there is ſome Difficulty or other, which to his Imagination is as Invincible as a Lion really would be. The Man, on the contrary, that applies himſelf to Books, or Buſineſs, contracts a chearful Confidence in all his Undertakings, from the daily Improvement of his Knowledge or Fortune, and inſtead of giving himſelf up to

Thick-ey'd Muſing and Curſed Melancholy, Shake.

has that conſtant Life in his Viſage and Converſation, which the Idle Splenatick Man borrows ſometimes from the Sun-ſhine, Exerciſe, or an agreeable Friend. A Recluſe idle Sobriety muſt be attended with more bitter Remorſe, than the moſt Active Debauchery can at any Intervals be moleſted with. The Rake, if he is a cautious Manager, will allow himſelf very little Time to examine his own Conduct, and will beſtow as few Reflections upon himſelf, as the Lingerer does upon any thing elſe, unleſs he has the Misfortune to Repent: I repeat the Misfortune to Repent, becauſe I have put the great Day of Account out of the preſent Caſe, and am now inquiring not whoſe Life is moſt Irreligious, but moſt Inconvenient. A Gentleman that has formerly been a very Eminent Lingerer, and ſomething Splenatick, informs me, that in one Winter he drank ſix Hampers of Spaw Water, ſeveral Gallons of Calybiate Tincture, two Hogſheads of Bitters at the Rate of 60 l. an Hogſhead, laid One hundred and fifty infallible Schemes, in every one of which he was diſappointed; received a thouſand Affronts during the Eaſterly Winds, and in ſhort run thro' more Anxiety and Expence, than the moſt meritorious Brave could boaſt of. Another tells me, that he fell into this way at the Univerſity, where the Youth are too apt to be lulled into a State of ſuch Tranquility as prejudices 'em againſt the Buſtle of that Wordly Buſineſs, for which this part of their Education ſhould prepare 'em. As he could with the utmoſt Secreſie be Idle in his own Chamber, he ſays he was for ſome Years irrecoverably ſunk, and immers'd in the Luxury of an Eaſie Chair, tho' at the ſame time, in the general Opinion, he paſſed for a hard Student. During this Lethargy he had ſome Intervals of Application to Books, which rather aggravated than ſuſpended the painful Thoughts of a miſ-ſpent Life. Thus his ſuppoſed Relief became his Puniſhment, and like the Damn'd in *Milton*, upon their Conveyance at certain Revolutions from Fire to Ice,

——*He felt by Turns the bitter Change*
Of fierce Extreams, Extreams by Change more fierce.

When

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